THE 10 out of 10 Times

Working in partnership with Peterborough, Essex, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire Schools

Issue 12 - Spring 2012

Cambridgeshire County Council

Cambridgeshire Catering & Cleaning Services

What's in a number?

The number of children eating a Primary School meal continues to grow in Cambridgeshire schools.

A little over three years ago there were 12,000 meals being served each day. This school year the average has increased to over 16,000 meals a day, and during January and February of this year, that number reached over 18,000 meals a day. So, why the increase you may ask? Excellent staff that are well trained; imaginative menus that meet parents' and pupils' needs and expectations; the introduction of new recipe cards to ensure consistency in the preparation and cooking of the meals; new photo menu boards, that are very popular with the children; the gradual introduction of plates and bowls, rather than meal trays; the commitment to holding theme days to make school meals fun; the various workshops we hold for the children, to make them more aware of a balanced diet and fresh foods; and, of course, the support and commitment of our valued clients. So, as you can see, there is no one reason for this success, but lots of great people and good ideas.

Richard Ware

Meet the Trainers

All Catering teams will have met at least one member of the CCS training team either on their induction day, at a training session or possibly as an extra pair of hands to help them through service. Last month, Megan Shale met with the team to find out more about their busy but varied roles.

Commitment to training

The team runs a host of regular internal training sessions from Induction Training, Customer Service and Safeguarding to Food Safety, Nutrition and Craft Training to name just a few. Training takes place in individual kitchen units, at the CCS state of the art FEAST training kitchen in Huntingdon or larger conferencing venues to suit the course being taught.

The team are passionate about the courses they deliver. Julia Wilson said, 'It is important for all members of CCS staff to grow in knowledge and practical skills which will enable them to provide our customers with the best service they can'. Regular training also keeps staff up-to-date with current legislation, changes in company policy and new systems of work.

Tracy Zwetsloot and Carol Mosley are both qualified NVQ assessors and one day each week is dedicated to assessing staff in Hospitality or Food Production Levels 1 and 2. Each trainer assesses two individuals over the course of a year, who are then verified for their qualification by Cambridge Regional College. Tracy said, 'It is very gratifying assessing staff in their job role, and at the same time watching them grow in confidence at work.'

Headed by Training Co-ordinator **Mary Bliszczak** (top left), the highly experienced training team comprises of **Carol Mosley, Carole Youngman** (top row, left to right), **Tracy Zwetsloot** and **Julia Wilson** (bottom row, left to right).

As an accredited trainer through the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Mary Bliszczak is able to offer training courses in Food Safety and Healthy Eating and Special Diets to non CCS staff. This is an important source of revenue for the service which is being continually enhanced.

CCS is also reaching out into the community and running cooking courses for parents at Sure Start Children's Centres. The training, lead by Carol Mosley, comprises 6 one day sessions to encourage families to buy fresh, healthy ingredients and cook from scratch. Carol said that the course also builds confidence in parents by giving them a stepping stone to get back into work.

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Keeping our kitchens ship shape

In addition to their regular training duties, the team are tasked with carrying out kitchen audits in every CCS kitchen each year. The audits ensure that all working policies, safety codes and procedures are being adhered to whilst identifying training needs. Since September, the audit results are being recorded using an electronic handheld tablet in conjunction with CCS' Cypad audit program. The use of this portable device has enhanced the audit process and ensures that accurate data is captured on site.

Working with pupils

CCS is more than just a school meal service and has over the last few years developed a series of hands-on workshops to teach pupils about healthy eating and having fun with cooking.

Carole Youngman has taken charge of this area, and with support from her fellow team members, runs 1 or 2 workshops each week.They could be fruit or vegetable workshops, pizza making, gingerbread decorating, soup making or any other session relevant to the school curriculum.

Left and Right: Healthy plates at Barnabas Oley Primary. Centre: Easter Bunny bread at Payne Primary

For example, Carole recently ran a bread making workshop at Peckover Primary School to tie in with their Saxon topic.

To engage the pupils, Carole likes to make the sessions as interactive as possible and also provides the children with activity sheets and the items that they have baked or decorated to take home. Every workshop has a learning plan and at the end of each session the children are asked to recall what they have learned.

All in a day's work

It is hard to say what a typical trainer's day involves as their roles are so varied. A working plan is set for each half term, with a certain amount of flexibility built in to allow the ladies to step in and help out should an emergency arise. The ultimate aim for the catering service is to provide a quality service to our customers every day, and the training team are dedicated to achieving this goal.

Operations Manager, Matt Gooderham, said, 'Through having the technical knowledge, the ability to motivate and develop employees, to deliver a multitude of training courses, to support the different sectors of CCS and continuing to evolve our workshops which ultimately provides added value, highlights just how important the training team's contribution is to the service.'

Mary Bliszczak said, 'It is very rewarding to watch people develop and do well in their role. If we can make a difference to encourage enthusiasm and progression then we can feel satisfied that we are doing a good job'. She concluded by saying, 'The secret to the success of the training team is that we work together not just as colleagues, but as friends .... And we all love our jobs!'

Online Payment System Update

Cambridgeshire Catering Services (CCS) is running a trial of online payment systems in schools during the current school year. Following a detailed evaluation of suppliers, CCS has recommended Tucasi and ParentPay to schools. Both suppliers are well established and specialise in working with schools.

The benefits of using cashless systems are significant for parents, schools and pupils. School meal uptake (including free meal entitlement), cash flow, auditing and security are improved with administration and meal wastage reduced.

The first 10 schools are signed up with suppliers for the pilot stage with more expected to join shortly. The pilot will run until the summer term when feedback and recommendations will be made available to all schools in Cambridgeshire. Advice and support from CCS for schools looking to take advantage of online payments is readily available on request.

For further information contact Phil Day, Project Manager, on 07814 187755 or phil.day@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

A Taste of Excellence

Along with our commitment to serve quality, locally sourced food to schools across Cambridgeshire and our borders, we also offer our Taste of Excellence hospitality range to secondary school clients. A new brochure designed to give a flavour of what we offer from light lunches to three course meals has been developed to promote the availability of this service provided by our dedicated secondary school catering teams.

Picture Gallery

Above: Christmas Lunch at Meadowgate

Above and Right: Christmas Lunch at Arbury Primary

Left and below: Christmas Lunch at Upwood Primary

Left: Indian Day at Elton Primary

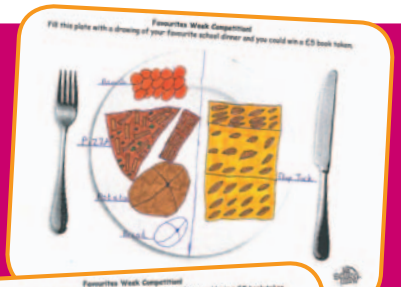
Below: Birthday Cakes at Robert Arkenstall Primary

Above: Love was truly in the air during the Valentine celebrations at St Bede's Inter Church School. The team produced, decorated and served over 120 cupcakes which flew off the counter with students asking for them to be available on a regular basis!

Left: Favourites Week competition winners at Wisbech St Mary

All the Favourites in One Week

Our first promotion for 2012 was Favourites Week which ran from 16th to 20th January and what a huge success it was! Our catering teams served a fantastic 89,700 meals that week – that's an additional 5,300 meals compared to the previous week. Well done to everyone who took part. In addition, CCS organised a competition for pupils to draw their favourite school dinner and we were delighted to give away book tokens to 40 pupils. Take a look at a few of our winning entries.



Above: Meadowgate School

Above: Alderman Jacobs Primary School

Right: Great Paxton Primary School

Africa comes to Histon Infants

A hugely successful African Day Lunch took place at Histon & Impington Infants School on Friday 10th February. An authentic menu, devised and cooked by Executive Chef David Haw, was well received by pupils and staff. Malva Pudding, a South African version of sticky toffee pudding, was the most popular dish with clean plates all round. In addition to the featured menu David prepared roasted plantains for the children to try.

Caterer, Marilyn Ellison, said, 'It was wonderful that children of such a young age were willing to try something new and a nice change to provide a totally different menu and style of food – interesting and fun'.

Summer Menu

Our exciting new summer menus will be launched in schools after the Easter Break. In addition to the primary menu leaflet for parents, CCS has developed an eye catching brochure to promote our service to secondary school customers. Included in the brochure is our enticing Meal of the Day menu, details of upcoming special events plus a page of great money saving vouchers to be used until October half term.

Happy Retirement Jane

After 23 years of service with CCS, Jane Forrester will retire on 31st March and is looking forward to a well earned rest and pursuing outside interests and hobbies.

Jane was appointed as a School Caterer at Offord Primary School in 1988, moving on to the Newton Primary School, Eltisley before becoming a Peripatetic Caterer in 1991. In 1999 she became Catering Supervisor for Denyse Bennett.

Colleagues, both past and present, joined Jane at Caldecote Village Hall for afternoon tea on Tuesday 27th March to mark the occasion. CCS would like to thank Jane for her hard work over the years and wish her all the very best in her retirement.

Welcome to Spencer Norman

We would like to welcome Spencer Norman who has joined the catering team at Cottenham Village College as the new Chef Manager. Spencer joins CCS from The Leys School in Cambridge where he was the Head Chef for 5 years. Spencer trained at the 4 star Garden House Hotel for 5 years then moved on to gain valuable experience at a number of establishments including The Dorchester and Park Lane Hotels in London.

Celebrate this Summer

This summer is packed with important events and CCS has a number of promotional lunches and competitions lined up to add to the excitement. In celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee we are offering a street party themed menu in both primary and secondary schools. England plays France in the Euro 2012 in June and our secondary school chefs have created a French menu featuring Chicken Chasseur, Pommes Noisettes and Crêpes Suzette. There will also be a chance to win England football shirts.

As the excitement builds for the Olympic Games, July will be all about 'foods of the world' with an International Week in primary schools and secondary schools offering international foods each day.

Caterers of the Month

Well done to our latest Caterers of the Month!

November
Maureen Bradford with her catering team Rachel Thompson and Jane Gray at **The Bellbird School** with Contract Manager, Denise Cole.

December
Lisa Buckle and her catering team Gillian Huggan and Hayley Snee at **Ditton Lodge Primary School** with Duncan Beck, Contract Manager.

January
Contract Manager Louise Charnock nominated her Mobile Team: Dinara Ahmed, Evelyn Murphy, Mandy Wright, Jane Langley, Allison Butler & Stephanie Saggese.

February
Nicola Stokes, Emma Wrench and Vanessa Decelis from **Hardwick Primary School** with Contract Manager Denyse Bennett.

March
Lorraine Osborne, School Caterer at Ashdon Primary School in Essex with Contract Manager, Denise Cole.